

A most Toad-spotted Traitor. Say thou no,
This Sword, this arme, and my best spirits are bent
To proue vpon thy heart, whereto I speake,
Thou lyest.

Bas. In wisdom I should aske thy name,
But since thy out-side looks so faire and Warlike,
And that thy tongue (some say) of breeding breathes,
What safe, and nicely I might well delay,
By rule of Knight-hood, I disdain and spurne:
Backe do I tisse these Treasons to thy head,
With the bell-hated Lye, ore-whelme thy heart,
Which for they yet glance by, and scarcely bruise,
This Sword of mine shall giue them instant way,
Where they shall rest for euer. Trumpets speake.

Alb. Save him, save him. *Alarums. Fights.*

Gon. This is practise *Closter*,
By th'law of Warre, thou wast not bound to answer
An vnknowne oppositer: thou art not vanquish'd,
But cozen'd, and beguild.

Alb. Shut your mouth Dame,
Or with this paper shall I stop it: hold Sir,
Thou worse then any name, reade thine owne euill:
No tearing Lady, I perceiue you know it.

Gon. Say if I do, the Lawes are mine not thine,
Who can araigne me for't? *Exit.*

Alb. Most monstrous! O, know'st thou this paper?

Bas. Aske me not what I know.

Alb. Go after her, she's desperate, gouerne her.

Bas. What you haue charg'd me with,
That haue I done,
And more, much more, the time will bring it out.
'Tis past, and so am I: But what art thou
That hast this Fortune on me? If thou'rt Noble,
I do forgiue thee.

Edg. Let's exchange charity:
I am no lesse in blood then thou art *Edmund*,
If more, the more th' hast wrong'd me.
My name is *Edgar*, and thy Fathers Sonne,
The Gods are iust, and of our pleafant vices
Make instruments to plague vs:
The darke and vitious place where thee he got,
Cost him his eyes.

Bas. Th' hast spoken right, 'tis true,
The Wheele is come full circle, I am heere.

Alb. Me thought thy very gate did prophesie
A Royall Noblenesse: I must embrace thee,
Let sorrow split my heart, if euer I
Did hate thee, or thy Father.

Edg. Worthy Prince I know't.

Alb. Where haue you hid your selfe?

How haue you knowne the miseries of your Father?
Edg. By nursing them my Lord. Lift a breefe tale,
And when 'tis told, O that my heart would burst.

The bloody proclamation to escape
That follow'd me so neere, (O our liues sweetnesse,
That we the paine of death would hourly dye,
Rather then die at once) taught me to shifte
Into a mad-mans rags, to assume a semblance
That very Dogges disdain'd: and in this habit
Met I my Father with his bleeding Ringe,
Their precious Stones new lost, became his guide,

Led him, begg'd for him, sau'd him from dispaire.
Neuer (O fault) reueal'd my selfe vnto him,
Vntill some halfe houre past when I was arm'd,
Not sure, though hoping of this good successe,
I ask'd his blessing, and from first to last

Told him our pilgrimage. But his flaw'd heart
(Alacke too weake the conflict to support)
Twixt two extremes of passion, ioy and greefe,
Burst smilingly.

Bas. This speech of yours hath mou'd me,
And shall perchance do good, but speake you on,
You looke as you had something more to say.

Alb. If there be more, more wofull, hold it in,
For I am almost ready to dissolue,
Hearing of this.

Enter a Gentleman.

Gen. Helpe, helpe: O helpe.

Edg. What kinde of helpe?

Alb. Speake man.

Edg. What meanes this bloody Knife?

Gen. 'Tis hot, it smoakes, it came euen from the beate
of—O she's dead.

Alb. Who dead? Speake man.

Gen. Your Lady Sir, your Lady; and her Sister
By her is payson'd: she confesses it.

Bas. I was contracted to them both, all three
Now marry in an instant.

Edg. Here comes *Kent*.

Enter Kent.

Alb. Produce the bodies, be they aliue or dead,
Conerill and Regans bodies brought in.

This iudgement of the Heauens that makes vs tremble,
Touches vs not with pittie: O, is this he?
The time will not allow the complement
Which very manners vrge.

Kent. I am come

To bid my King and Master aye good night.
Is he not here?

Alb. Great thing of vs forgot,
Speake *Edmund*, where's the King? and where's *Cordelia*?
Seest thou this obiekt *Kent*?

Kent. Alacke, why thus?

Bas. Yet *Edmund* was belou'd:
The one the other poison'd for my sake,
And after flew her selfe.

Alb. Euen so: couer their faces.

Bas. I part for life: some good I meane to do
Despight of mine owne Nature. Quickly send,
(Be brieue in it) to th' Castle, for my Writ
Is on the life of *Lear*, and on *Cordelia*:
Nay, send in time.

Alb. Run, run, O run.

Edg. To who my Lord? Who ha's the Office?
Send thy token of repreue.

Bas. Well thought on, take my Sword,
Giue it the Captaine.

Edg. Hast thee for thy life.

Bas. He hath Commission from thy Wife and me,
To hang *Cordelia* in the prison, and
To lay the blame vpon her owne dispaire,
That she for-did her selfe.

Alb. The Gods defend her, beare him hence awhile.

Enter Lear with Cordelia in his armes.

Lear. Howle, howle, howle: O you are men of stones,
Had I your tongues and eyes, I'd vse them so,
That Heauens vault should crack: she's gone for euer.
I know when one is dead, and when one liues,
She's dead as earth: Lend me a Looking-glasse,

If that her breath will mist or staine the stone,
Why then she liues.

Kent. Is this the promis'd end?

Edg. Or image of that horror.

Alb. Fall and cease.

Lear. This feather stirs, she liues: if it be so,
It is a chance which do's redeeme all sorrowes
That euer I haue felt.

Kent. O my good Master.

Lear. Prythee away.

Edg. 'Tis Noble *Kent* your Friend.

Lear. A plague vpon you Murderers, Traitors all,
I might haue sau'd her, now she's gone for euer:
Cordelia, Cordelia, stay a little. Ha:

What is't thou saist? Her voice was euer soft,
Gentle, and low, an excellent thing in woman.
I kill'd the Slaue that was a hanging thee.

Gen. 'Tis true (my Lords) he did.

Lear. Did I not fellow?

I haue seene the day, with my good biting Faulchion
I would haue made him skip: I am old now,
And these same crosses spoile me. Who are you?

My eyes are not o'th' best, Ile tell you straight.

Kent. If Fortune brag of two, she lou'd and hated,
One of them we behold.

Lear. This is a dull sight, are you not *Kent*?

Kent. The same: your Seruant *Kent*,

Where is your Seruant *Caius*?

Lear. He's a good fellow, I can tell you that,
He'll strike and quickly too, he's dead and rotten.

Kent. No my good Lord, I am the very man.

Lear. Ile see that straight.

Kent. That from your first of difference and decay,
Haue follow'd your sad steps.

Lear. Your are welcome hither.

Kent. Nor no man else:

All's cheerlesse, darke, and deadly,
Your eldest Daughters haue fore-done themselves,
And desperately are dead

Lear. I so I thinke.

Alb. He knowes not what he saies, and vaine is it

That we present vs to him.

Enter a Messenger.

Edg. Very bootlesse.

Mess. *Edmund* is dead my Lord.

Alb. That's but a trifle heere:

You Lords and Noble Friends, know our intent,
What comfort to this great decay may come,
Shall be appl'd. For vs we will resigne,
During the life of this old Maiesty
To him our absolute power, you to your rights,
With boote, and such addition as your Honours
Haue more then merited. All Friends shall
Taste the wages of their vertue, and all Foes
The cup of their deservings: O see, see.

Lear. And my poore Foole is hang'd: no, no, no life?

Why should a Dog, a Horse, a Rat haue life,
And thou no breath at all? Thou'lt come no more,
Neuer, neuer, neuer, neuer, neuer.

Pray you vndo this Button. Thanke you Sir,
Do you see this? Looke on her? Looke her lips,
Looke there, looke there. *He dies.*

Edg. He faints, my Lord, my Lord.

Kent. Breake heart, I prythee breake.

Edg. Looke vp my Lord.

Kent. Vex not his ghost, O let him passe, he hates him,
That would vpon the wracke of this rough world
Stretch him out longer.

Edg. He is gon indeed.

Kent. The wonder is, he hath endur'd so long,
He but vsurpt his life.

Alb. Beare them from hence, our present businesse
Is generall woe: Friends of my soule, you twaine,
Rule in this Realme, and the gor'd state sustaine.

Kent. I haue a iourney Sir, shortly to go,
My Master calls me, I must not say no.

Edg. The waight of this sad time we must obey,
Speake what we feele, not what we ought to say:
The oldest hath borne most, we that are yong,
Shall neuer see so much, nor liue so long.

Exeunt with a dead March.
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FINIS.